

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed December 28, 2005.

1. **Correction of Election**

In the initial Office Action mailed August 10, 2005, the Examiner indicated that the Application contains claims directed to the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention: (A) FIG. 2, (B) FIG. 8, and (C) FIG. 10. The Office Action required the Applicants under 35 U.S.C §121 to elect a single disclosed species for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable.

The initial Office Action mailed August 10, 2005 incorrectly indicated that Claim 1 was generic and read on all the three species. Specifically, the initial Office Action's indication was incorrect because Claim 1 only reads on Species A associated with Figures 2-7. Claim 1 recites "*a ground trace disposed upon the dielectric layer with the dielectric layer between the ground trace and the trace suspension assembly backing layer, the ground trace extending along the actuator arm and electrically connected to the slider and the flex cable assembly for grounding the slider to the flex cable assembly.*" In this regard, the embodiment shown in Figure 8 does not include the ground trace being electrically connected to the flex cable (and therefore does not read on Species B). Further, the embodiment shown in Figure 10 does not include the ground trace as being disposed upon the dielectric layer with the dielectric layer between the ground trace and the trace suspension assembly backing layer (and therefore does not read on Species C).

In addition, Applicants' own Response to Office Action on filed on September 6, 2006, was unintentionally incorrect. As mentioned above, Applicants previously indicated

that they believed that independent Claims 6, 7, 12, 13 and 18 were generic as to all three species. However, Applicants review now indicates that independent Claims 1 and 6 read only on Species A, independent Claims 7 and 12 read only on Species B, and independent Claims 13 and 18 read only on Species A and C.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants' previous election as to Species A was inadvertently wrong. At this time, Applicants would like to correct their election by now electing Species C associated with Figures 10-17. In this regard, by this Response to Office Action, Applicants have canceled Claims 1-6 and 13-18 without prejudice.

2. Independent Claims 7 and 13 are novel and non-obvious over the prior art.

In the present Office Action, Claims 7-9, 11-13 and 15-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,645,735 to Bennin et al.

By this Response to Office Action, Applicants have amended independent Claims 7 and 12 to include the subject matter of dependent Claim 11. Newly amended Claims 7 and 12 each recite a head gimbal assembly that includes "*read and write traces disposed upon the dielectric layer with the dielectric layer between the read and write traces and the trace suspension assembly backing layer*" and that "*the read and write traces being disposed in electrical communication with the slider.*"

In contrast, Bennin et al. discloses utilization of a "*gimbal flexure and electrical interconnect assembly (gimbal interconnect) 30*" that functions both as a sturdy, self-supporting gimbal and as an electrical conduit to the slider. The gimbal interconnect 30 includes "traces 33" that are used for both read and write functions. Each of the traces 33 are

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coated with a thin dielectric coating 42. (col. 6, lns. 42-51; and col. 8, lns. 19-23 and lns. 51-55).

In this regard, the apparatus of Bennin et al. does not include an equivalent structure to Applicants' claimed "*trace suspension backing layer*." This is because the "traces 33" of the cited reference are specifically configured to support themselves. As such, the Bennin et al. reference would tend to teach away from utilization of a trace suspension backing layer that is used to support read and write traces (as is required by Applicants' Claims 7 and 12). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the applicability of the cited prior art reference as applied to the pending claims.

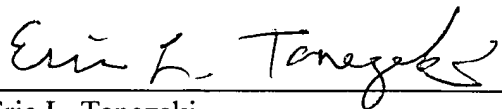
Further, by this Response to Office Action, Applicants have added new Claims 19 and 20 respectively dependent from Claim 7 and 12 that recite that the read and write traces comprise copper and that the ground trace comprises stainless steel. The subject matter of such new claim is fully supported by the originally filed application. (See pg. 13, para. 43).

If any additional fee is required, please charge Deposit Account Number 19-4330.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/5/6

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